

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Original) A device for blocking a fuel assembly in a housing of a transport basket, the assembly comprising an upper end piece and the housing comprising a first open end and a second end, the device comprising:

means for making a rigid connection between the upper end piece of the fuel assembly and the open end of the housing, in a predetermined relative position such that the assembly bears in contact with at least one face of the housing on at least part of its length, the means for making a rigid connection being placed above the upper end piece of the assembly.

22. (Original) A device according to claim 21, in which the fuel assembly and the housing have polygonal sections and the predetermined relative position is such that the upper end piece is bearing in contact with the two adjacent faces of the housing.

23. (Original) A device according to claim 22, in which the fuel assembly and the housing have square sections.

24. (Original) A device according to claim 21, further comprising  
a part of the housing with a smaller section, located close to the second end of the housing, the part with a smaller section having dimensions approximately equal to dimensions of the lower end piece of the fuel assembly.

25. (Original) A device according to claim 21, in which the predetermined relative position is such that the fuel assembly is suspended by the upper end piece.
26. (Original) A device according to claim 21, in which the means for making a rigid connection comprises a connecting device configured to be fixed on the upper end piece of the assembly by first clamping means and that can be fixed in the open end of the housing by second clamping means.
27. (Original) A device according to claim 26, in which the connecting device includes means for transverse displacement configured to move the upper end piece of the assembly towards the two adjacent faces of the housing and away from them.
28. (Original) A device according to claim 27, in which the connecting device includes means for axial displacement configured to move the assembly away from the second end of the housing and towards the second end.
29. (Withdrawn) A device according to claim 28, in which the first clamping means, the second clamping means, the means for transverse displacement, and the means for axial displacement are activated by separate control devices configured to be maneuvered separately.
30. (Withdrawn) A device according to claim 29, in which  
the connecting device has a longitudinal axis configured to be oriented parallel to the longitudinal axis of the fuel assembly, and the first clamping means comprises

jaws configured to move onto a first part of the connecting device along directions approximately radial with respect to the axis,

the second clamping means comprises

a bayonet ring configured to rotate about a second part of the connecting device about the axis,

the means for axial displacement comprises

means for controlling a relative displacement between the first part and the second part along the axis and

the means for transverse displacement comprises

at least one sliding block configured to move onto the first part of the connecting device along a direction approximately radial with respect to the axis, the sliding block also forming part of the second clamping means.

31. (Currently Amended) A device according to claim 28, in which the first clamping means, the second clamping means, and the means for axial displacement are activated by a single control device and ~~the means for transverse displacement is activated by another control device configured to be maneuvered separately from the single control device.~~

32. (Original) A device according to claim 31, in which the single control device is a screw, anchored free to rotate on the connecting device, the screw acting on thrust rods forming the first clamping means and the means for axial displacement, and acting on jaws forming the second clamping means, through control rods articulated on the connecting device, on a nut engaged on the screw, on the thrust rods and the jaws, and the means for transverse displacement comprises thrust pads anchored on the connecting device.

33. (Original) A device according to claim 28, in which the first clamping means, the means for transverse displacement, and the means for axial displacement are activated by a single control device and the second clamping means comprises a separate attachment device.

34. (Currently Amended) A device according to claim ~~[[23]]~~ 33, in which the single control device is a screw, anchored free to rotate on the connecting device, the screw acting on claws forming the first clamping means, the means for axial displacement, and the means for transverse displacement, through a nut engaged on the screw and on which the claws are articulated.

35-40. (Cancelled)

41. (New) A connecting device adapted for use with a transport housing capable of containing a fuel assembly therein, the device comprising:

a body;

a clamping member located on the body and configured to mount the device to a head plate of the transport housing;

a control device coupled to the body, the control device configured to freely rotate along a longitudinal axis;

a claw mechanism operably coupled to the control device, wherein the claw mechanism is configured to pivot between a retracted position and an extended position in response to rotation of the control device, wherein the claw mechanism engages an upper end piece of the transport housing in response to the control device being rotated in a first direction.

42. (New) A device according to claim 41 further comprising: a pin guide coupled to the body, the pin guide having a stop surface configured to come into contact with an upper end piece within the transport housing when the device is securely engaged with the transport housing.

43. (New) A device according to claim 42, wherein the claw mechanism is configured to upwardly move the upper end piece along the longitudinal axis until the upper end piece is securely in contact with the stop surface of the pin guide in response to the control device being further rotated in the first direction.

44. (New) A device according to claim 41, further comprising a nut coupled to the control device and the claw mechanism, the nut operable to move along the longitudinal axis in response to rotation of the control device, wherein rotation of the control device in a first rotational direction causes the nut to move upward along the longitudinal axis and cause the claw mechanism to pivot outward away from the longitudinal axis.